

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher L. Smith
Commanding Officer, 96th Composite Squadron
United States Air Force Auxiliary, Civil Air Patrol

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher L. Smith is the Commanding Officer of the 96th Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol. The unit is based in Stow, Ohio at the Robert Pinn National Guard Armory. Civil Air Patrol is the Auxiliary of the United States Air Force whose primary operations are Homeland Security and Emergency Service Missions, Aerospace Education, and Cadet Programs for American youth.



Lt. Col. Smith was born on February 7th, 1964, in Akron, Ohio, and works professionally as a producer/director for a video and multimedia production company in Cleveland.

Lt. Col. Smith joined the Air Force Auxiliary in 1988, and trained in personnel and administration for Group 2 Headquarters, stationed at Wadsworth Municipal Airport in Medina County. He also trained in aircrew operations and earned his Scanner rating as an air crew search and rescue specialist. Smith served as the Personnel Officer for Group 2 until 1989 when he took a job assignment as the Marketing Director for Volvo Equestrian Sports in Tampa, Florida. Lt. Col. Smith went on a TDY assignment and served as the Cadet Programs Officer for the MacDill AFB Cadet Squadron (the 98th) and participated in the Florida Wing Cadet Special Activities Boards and the MacDill Cadet Officer School. After returning to Ohio Wing in 1990, Smith went on to serve as the Deputy Commander for Cadets at the Medina County Skyhawks SQD 200, and later as the Commanding Officer after the unit was re-designated SQD 1200. Lt. Col. Smith helped train the unit in extensive ground search and rescue operations, and the 1200th became one of the key ground search units in the state. This led to Smith's additional appointment to the Assistant Director (and later Director) post of Ohio Wing's Ground Operations Training School. The Material developed by the GOTS would later serve as one of the foundations for the National CAP Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) training program. In 1993, Smith served on the Group 4 staff in Ohio Wing as Director of Logistics, and later that year, helped establish the new 301st Composite Squadron (later re-designated the 96th) and instituted an experimental program to develop regional logistics operations within CAP. Lt. Col. Smith became the Deputy Commander of the 96th in 1997, and then Squadron Commander in 2002.

His CAP awards and decorations include The National Commander's Commendation (twice decorated), a national Unit Citation (under service to the 96th), the "Yeager" Aerospace Education Award, and has completed his professional development training as an officer up to the Civil Air Patrol "Paul E. Garber" Award. Smith has also earned his Leadership decoration with a Master Rating in Logistics and Communications. His field service in Emergency Services has earned him Rescue "Find" and Search and Rescue decorations with over 600 hours on actual Air Force SAR missions. Lt. Col. Smith has also achieved his Master Rating in Ground SAR Operations and serves as a Ground Team Commander, and Ground Branch Director during Emergency Service exercises and missions.

With his wife Lori, their four cats, and one dog, Smith makes his home in Akron, Ohio. He is an avid Science Fiction and history buff. The Lieutenant Colonel also serves as the first sergeant of a Civil War reenacting unit which earned him a background role in the motion picture, "Gods and Generals".

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